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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 8 July 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing regarding your note dated 3 March 1994 concerning resolution 48/75 K, entitled "Moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines", adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1993. On instructions from my Government, I am pleased to provide you with the following information regarding that resolution.

* A/49/50/Rev.1.

The Government of Spain is convinced that a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines would reduce substantially the human and economic costs resulting from the use of such weapons.

A particularly dangerous characteristic of land-mines is that they continue causing injury to persons and damage to property for years or even decades after the cessation of hostilities. The removal of mines is a slow and dangerous process and, in some cases, is virtually impossible: many years are required to clear small areas and mine clearance personnel are the victims of mines with alarming frequency.

The Government of Spain therefore has decided that henceforth, for a renewable period of one year, it will deny any request to export anti-personnel land-mines.

This decision was adopted on 24 February 1994 by the competent organ of the Spanish Government, the Inter-Ministerial Board for the Regulation of External Trade in Defensive Hardware and Dual Purpose Hardware, comprising members of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, the Interior, the Economy and Finance and Industry, Trade and Tourism.

At its meeting on 1 July 1994, the Council of Ministers of Spain took note of the decision of the Inter-Ministerial Board.

Spain calls upon all countries of the international community to adopt a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines similar to that established by Spain, for it is convinced that such initiatives will help to mitigate the serious impact on life and property occasioned by the use of such weapons.

This decision of the Government of Spain is fully in accord with the following steps which it has recently taken:

(a) The submission to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, together with its partners in the European Union, of resolution 48/7 on assistance in mine clearance;

(b) The ratification on 29 December 1993 of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which entered fully into force for Spain on 29 June 1994;

(c) Spain is participating in the preparatory work for the forthcoming Conference to review that Convention to be held in 1995, which will be devoted in particular to restricting the use of land-mines even further.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as an official document under item 64 of the provisional list.

(Signed) Juan Ramón MARTINEZ SALAZAR
Chargé d'affaires a.i.